

July 3, 2018

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-6115

Dear Representatives Walden and Harper:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your request for information regarding the Utah Hospital Association's work in regard to the availability of sexual assault forensic exams across Utah. Please see the following responses to the questions posed by the Committee:


- 1. How many hospitals in Utah is Utah Hospital Association aware of that have a SANE program?** Currently Utah has 19 active Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) programs operating throughout the state. This number includes 14 hospital-based programs and five SANE Team regional programs, two of which are based in hospitals. The hospital based and regional SANE programs provide coverage for approximately 39 of the 44 acute care hospitals in Utah. In addition, over 400 nurses and others have been SANE trained, making Utah one of the highest SANE training states per capita as listed in the 2016 GAO report.
- 2. Does Utah Hospital Association maintain a database of hospitals and/or other entities across Utah that have a SANE Program?** UHA does not maintain a database of hospitals and/or entities that have a SANE program. It is our understanding that Utah does not have a public database of SANE entities because a patient must come to a hospital or contact law enforcement to obtain care. A patient cannot directly contact a SANE program. However, the Utah Department of Health's Violence and Injury Prevention Program has dedicated a section on their website to Rape and Sexual Assault Resources which includes a listing of Rape Crisis Programs in Utah as well as toll-free phone numbers for the Utah Domestic Violence Link Line and the Rape & Sexual Assault Crisis Line. Additionally, the 2018 Utah State legislature has allocated \$50,000 for a statewide electronic medical record for sexual assault exams. This would allow all SANE records to be protected digitally, improve access to law enforcement, allow peer review and enable sexual assault statistics to be more easily maintained by the state. The Utah Coalition Against Sexual Assault (UCASA) in their 2017 report does a good job of listing all SANE programs in Utah.

3. **What steps, if any, has the Utah Hospital Association taken to increase access or address the lack of access to SAFE kits in hospitals across Utah?** Over the years, UHA has had interaction with SANE and SAFE through the work of Wasatch Forensic Nurses (WFN; formerly Salt Lake SANE) and UCASA. Since 2002 it has been the work of WFN and UCASA to offer in-state training for nurses who want to provide these exams. The standard set by the International Association of Forensic Nurses (IAFN) is that each nurse complete 40 class hours of training prior to receiving clinical exam practice. In Utah, UCASA and WFN have been providing two classes a year for more than 10 years. For the last two years the education has been provided at no cost through federal grants. UHA has also teamed up with the Utah Department of Health to remind Utah acute care hospitals of their responsibility to have SAFE kits available at their hospital and most are actively complying.
  
4. **What challenges has Utah Hospital Association identified that hospitals face in providing access to these services? How is the Utah Hospital Association working with your hospitals to address those challenges?** The greatest obstacle to providing this care in rural and frontier communities is having nurses do an adequate number of exams to achieve and maintain clinical competency. Utah has a number of small hospital who are as much as 70 miles from the next closest hospital. UHA has supported UCASA's efforts to provide onsite education at some Utah rural hospitals, bringing a "model" patient onsite to assist SANEs in rural communities in practicing exam skills, but funding is limited. It is very hard for rural hospitals to prioritize the funds to do these exams when they have so many other healthcare responsibilities to the community. The State of Utah reimburses \$750.00 per exam, but if a program conducts only 2-3 exams a year, it is difficult if not impossible to cover the cost of equipment, education, call time, court time and other expenses that go into running and sustaining a SANE program. WFN, which will do approximately 800 exams this year, still requires \$50,000 + in grants to meet all expenses. Another major problem is lack a reciprocity to allow nurses who are not part of an independent team to go from one hospital to another. For example, two rural Utah communities, Vernal and Roosevelt, are only 30 minutes apart but they each require their own team of nurses. The independent teams must have MOUs in place with every hospital and they must provide malpractice for their nurses and other administrative costs. Small programs cannot afford to create the infrastructure to respond to additional facilities.
  
5. **For hospitals in Utah that have a SANE program, does Utah Hospital Association provide guidance, standards or best practices on how to treat patients that come to the hospital seeking a SAFE kit?** The Utah Hospital Association has not specifically provided guidance regarding SAFE kit protocol to members. We have encouraged them to be active on this issue and use the expertise of UCASA and WFN to educate hospitals on best practices and standards. Our statewide SANE Coordinator, Susan Chasson, is currently serving as President of the International Association of Forensic Nurses (IAFN), representing more than 4,000 forensic nurses across the U.S. and Canada. In 2016, IAFN, in partnership with the American College of Emergency Physicians and under the direction of the Office of

Victims of Crime, revised the SANE Program and Operations Guide, available at <https://www.ovcttac.gov/saneguide/introduction>. This guide provides detailed information and resources for both starting and sustaining SANE programs. These guidelines are followed by WFN and UCASA and the hospital based SANE programs in Utah.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide information on Utah's SANE initiatives. We feel that we have a strong collaborative process in Utah between the hospitals, nurses, UCASA and others involved in this issue. Please feel free to contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Greg Bell".

Greg Bell  
President/CEO  
Utah Hospital Association

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be a stylized "DJ" or similar initials.